

ABSTRACT

THESIS: Rating System for Punting in the National Football League

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The National Football League (NFL) currently has only one position, quarterback, for which there is a formula for calculating a single value to measure on-field performance during a game, season, or career. However, no player has a greater ability to affect field position in a single play than the punter. This study develops two punt ratings from official recorded punt statistics since the inception of the Super Bowl. The first rating is based on average punt length and measures punting performances from 1966 through the 1975 NFL season. The second punt rating measures punting performance from 1976 through the present and is calculated from two statistics; net average punt length and the percent of punts placed inside-the-20 yard line. The mean value of these ratings is fifty with a minimum and maximum score of zero and one-hundred, respectively. Furthermore, by comparing the careers of all punters, Ray Guy is confirmed as the most valuable punter to have played in the NFL; thereby validating his 2014 selection to the Pro Football Hall of Fame.